Introduction of Express Train from Bolpur to New Delhi

2887. DR. RAMCHANDRA DOME : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the demand of the people of Bolpur (Santineketan) to introduce an express train from Bolpur to New Delhi; and

(b) if so, the time by which the said train is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There is no proposal at present to introduce an express train from Bolpur to New Delhi due to operational and resource constraints besides lack of traffic justification.

[Translation]

Technical Training Scheme for Mining in Delhi

2888. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether any technical training scheme is being run for mining in the National Capital Territory of Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether the Government propose to launch any such scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Shortage of Ticket Checking and Catering Staff

2889. DR. ASIM BALA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is shortage of ticket checking and catering staff in all divisions of Eastern Railway;

(b) if so, the details of such shortage and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to recruit more staff to remove the shortfall?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) (a) to (c): The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

International Flights from Cochin Airport

2890. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Airlines/Air India propose to introduce International flights from Cochin Airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any other airlines conducts flights from Cochin to foreign destinations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b). At present, there is no proposal to introduce international flights from Cochin Airport.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Expansion of Mumbai Metropolitan Region

2891. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that there is a public demand to include the cities of Bhiwandi and Kalyan in the greater area of Mumbai Metropolitan Region; and

(b) if so, the time limit by which the above demand is likely to be fulfilled?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Sir, requests have been received for inclusion of Bhiwandi into Mumbai Telephone System for the purpose of group dilalling facilities, Kalyan has the facility of group dialling with Mumbai at 180 sec. pulse rate. Bhiwandi does not fulfil the criteria laid down for provision of this facility.

(b) Does not arise.

Heavy Haul Goods Trains

2892. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that long loops suitable for 9000 tonnes Heavy Haul Goods trains had been constructed in the Mughalsarai-Gaziabad section of Northern Railway to transport coal and other bulk commodities, at a cost of about Rs. 5 crores and that 9000 tonnes are not operated and the long loops are not used;

(b) whether it is a fact that Radio Remote Control equipments were bought at a cost of about Rs. 10 Crores to haul 9000 tonnes trains in Kiriburu-Bokaro section of South Eastern Railway to Transport Iron Ore and that these trains had to be stopped because long loops suitable for 9000 tonne trains were not constructed in this line but in Northern Railway;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and why long loops were built in Northern and not in South Eastern Railway and why 9000 tonne trains were stopped in South Eastern Railway; and

(d) if not, the details of the actual costs and losses and details of the 9000 tonne train operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes Sir. Long loops were constructed at Gaipura, Malwan, Kaurara & Dankaur to accommodate 9000 tonnes Heavy haul trains at the cost of Rs. 3.05 Cr. which were run on a trial measure. The loops were used during the trial.

(b) to (d). Two sets of Radio Remote Control equipment were procured at a cost of US $ 1,310,373. Trials were conducted between Kiriburu-Bokaro section of South Eastern Railway. The technical feasibility of use of such a system was established but due to operational and maintenance problems, the trials were not extended. It is not true that 9000 tonne trains had to be stopped because of non-availability of long loops in South Eastern Railway.

Private Courier Companies

2893. SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of licences issued to private courier companies during the last three years;

(b) the details of their turn-over during the above period;

(c) the details of turn-over of Department of Posts, EMS wing for the above period; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for the efficiency improvement of EMS Wing?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The Department of Post does not issue licences to private courier companies.

(b) Does not arise in view of the above.

(c) The turnover of Speed Post during the last three years is as under:

Year	Turnover (in crores)
1993-94	50.13
1994-95	54.18
1995-96	57.40

(d) The following steps have been taken to improve the efficiency of Speed Post Service:

(i) Improved responsiveness to customer needs in the matter of picking up and delivery of Speed Post articles.

(ii) Rationalisation of procedure in Speed Post Centres to make them more customer oriented & to ensure expeditious handling of Speed Post articles.

(iii) Introduction of Track and Trace system to cover National Speed Post Centres in phased manner.

(iv) Computerisation of Transit Mail Offices for Speed Post offices in big cities.

(v) Training & upgrading the skills of staff deployed in Speed Post Centres.

(vi) Better marketing of Speed Post Services by organising customer meets and publicity.

Distribution of Postal Dak

2894. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (HARDOI) : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Sorting their own mail" appearing in the 'Tribune' dated September 19, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon;

(d) the number of cases where the postal mail was found dumped undistributed in Delhi in the last one year: and

(e) the action taken against the guilty staff of the postal department?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There was an instance of irregular delivery of mails in beat No. 25, Charan Bagh locality, of Patiala Head Post Office in September 1996. The regular postman of that beat went on medical leave and some ad-hoc arrangement was made for delivery of mails in the absence of that postman. The residents of Charan Bagh locality approached the Postman for non-delivery of their mails and the latter handed over the malls to them in the Head Post office itself for furthei distribution without bringing it to the notice of the Delivery Assistant or the Assistant Postmaster (Delivery).

(c) The Chief Postmaster General, Punjab Circle has got the matter enquired into. It was found that improper arrangement of postmen staff and ineffective supervision by the Assistant Postmaster (Delivery) led to the incident.

The officiating arrangement in the leave vacancy was revised and the accumulated mails got delivered by September 20, 1996, Disciplinary action has been taken against two Postal Assistants and three Postmen found guilty. Four of the officials at fault have been shifted from their positions.